CATECHISM,

IN WHICH

THE PRINCIPAL TESTIMONIES

IN PROOF OF THE

DIVINE AUTHORITY OF CHRISTIANITY

ARE BRIEFLY CONSIDERED.

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PREFACE.

THE mode of communicating religious information by Catechiſm, has been univerſally approved, and conſidered as particularly adapted to the inſtruction of youth. The Catechiſms which have fallen under the obſervation of the author of the following manual, have embraced only the *doctrines* and *precepts* revealed in the Scriptures, though there appears to be no reaſon why they ſhould not be made ſubſervient to the purpoſe of familiarizing the *teſtimonies* which demonſtrate the divine authority of the Scriptures themſelves.

ſelves. The evidence of Chriſtianity ſhould be diſplayed under every form, and it is hoped that the few pages here offered to the public, will exhibit it under a point of view, that may attract at leaſt a curſory attention.

A CATECHISM

ON THE

EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

QUÆST. WHAT Religion do you profeſs?

ANS. Chriſtianity.

Q. Why do you profeſs that Religion?

A. Becauſe it was imparted by God for the direction of mankind.

Q. What proofs are there of its divine authority?

A. Many: the principal proofs are thoſe which are derived from *Prophecy*, *Miracles*, and *Internal Evidence*.

Q. What is meant by the proofs from *Prophecy?*

A. That demonſtration which reſults from the Prophecies which have been uttered from the beginning of the world, through ſucceſſive ages, and which have

continued to receive their partial or complete accompliſhment in circumſtances and events connected with the riſe, progreſs, and eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity.

Q. Where are theſe Prophecies recorded?

A. In the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament.

Q. What certainty is there that theſe preſumed Prophecies were compoſed, and delivered by their reputed authors, previouſly to the circumſtances and events to which they are ſuppoſed to refer?

A. The certainty which reſults, firſt, from the conſideration, that it muſt have been impoſſible to impoſe Prophecies on the acceptance of mankind, fabricated after the events which they pretended to foretel, eſpecially, under the names of diſtinguiſhed authors, who had ſuſtained important offices, and whoſe writings were received into the ſacred canon of the Church: ſecondly, from the reflection that theſe Prophecies are intermixed with hiſtorical relations, reported often by contemporaries of the events deſcribed, addreſſed

dreſſed to the countrymen of the Prophets, who could not either be deceived as to the truth of the repreſentations expreſsly furniſhed for their inſtruction, or have entertained any doubts as to the general fidelity of the dates and circumſtances inſeparably interwoven with the accounts, implicated with great variety of minute and notorious particulars, and with every detail of time, circumſtance, and place; and laſtly, from the authenticity of the books in which the Prophecies are contained, as the genuine and inſpired works of the authors whoſe names they ſeverally bear, and the periods of whoſe exiſtence are known.

Q. How is the authenticity of theſe books demonſtrated?

A. By their reception as the undoubted productions of their reſpective authors, who delivered them as containing communications from God, on which laws and inſtitutions both political and religious were to be grounded; by their preſervation under the care of prieſts, ſovereigns, and other public functionaries, as

the acknowledged documents on which civil and eccleſiaſtical laws were authorized and adminiſtered: by their adoption into the Hebrew and Chriſtian canons, into which no books were admitted, but ſuch as were of clear and incontrovertible authority, which were collected as a ſacred depoſit for faith and inſtruction, and which are appealed to as indiſputably authentic by numberleſs writers of different perſuaſions and ſects in every age; which exhibited to ſucceſſive generations the proofs of their inſpiration in the progreſſive completion of prophecies that revealed the moſt remarkable events of the Jewiſh hiſtory, and of other nations connected with that people, and which laſtly contain predictions of circumſtances verified to our own obſervation in the preſent ſcenes of the world.

Q. How do the Prophecies contained in the books of the Old Teſtament tend to confirm the truth of Chriſtianity?

A. They ſhow that it was a divine ſcheme concerted in infinite mercy, even from the time of the firſt fall from innocence,

cence, for the reſtoration of mankind. They exhibit the promiſe of the Meſſiah, "the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world," from the firſt general intimations of the victorious ſeed of the woman that ſhould ariſe, to the full and explicit declaration of the period, character, and ſufferings of the Meſſiah; and they reveal, with gradual diſplay and increaſing clearneſs, the complete deſign and leading circumſtances of the Goſpel diſpenſation, ſo that at the appearance of Chriſt, a general expectation of his coming prevailed among the heathen nations and among the Jews, which is atteſted as well by prophane as ſacred accounts [a].

Q. To whom and in what manner were theſe Prophecies communicated?

A. To different perſons in different ages—to Adam—to the Patriarchs, and to the Hebrew nation—by the miniſtry of angels and prophets.

[a] See Tacit. lib. v. c. 13. Sueton. Veſp. c. i. §. 4. Auguſt. c. xciv. Virgil. Eclog. iv. Matt. ii. 2.

Q. How

Q. How were the prophecies relating to the Meſſiah reſtricted?

A. To the ſeed of the woman—to the deſcendants of Abraham—to the poſterity of Jacob—to the tribe of Judah—to the houſe of David.

Q. What particulars with reſpect to his character did they foreſhew?

A. His attributes of "Wonderful, Counſellor, the mighty God, the Everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace [b]," "the God with us," his miraculous conception and birth of a virgin [c], his appearance without "form or comelineſs", his coming forth from "Bethlehem Ephratah [d]", his functions of a prophet, a prieſt [e] and a king, his miraculous works by which "the eyes of the blind ſhould be opened, and the ears of the deaf unſtopped, the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb ſing [f]:" his "coming as a king to Jeruſalem, juſt, and having ſalvation, lowly, and riding upon an aſs, and upon a colt

[b] Iſaiah ix. 6.
[c] Iſaiah vii. 14.
[d] Micah v. 2.
[e] Deut. xviii. 18. Pſ. cx. 4.
[f] Iſaiah xxxv. 5, 6.

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the foal of an aſs[g]:" his ſufferings as "deſpiſed and rejected of men," as "wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities," having "the chaſtiſement of our peace upon him, and the iniquity of all laid upon him:" as ſold for thirty pieces of ſilver[h], as "taken from priſon and judgment, as brought like a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb[i]:" as "having his hands and his feet pierced, his garments parted, and lots caſt upon his veſture[k]:" as "offered gall to eat and vinegar to drink[l]:" as "pouring out his ſoul unto death, and being numbered with the tranſgreſſors[m]:" as "making his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death[n]:" as "not left in hell nor ſuffered to ſee corruption;" but as ſeated in the "preſence of God, where is fulneſs of joy, and at his right

[g] Zechar. ix. 9. [h] Zechar. xi. 12, 13.
[i] Iſaiah liii. 7. comp. with Mark xv. 5.
[k] Pſalm xxii. 16—18. lxix. 8.
[l] Pſalm lxix. 21. [m] Iſaiah liii. 12.
[n] Iſaiah liii. 9.

hand,

hand, where are pleaſures for evermore [o]:" and it muſt be obſerved, that many of theſe texts were underſtood to relate to the Meſſiah long before his appearance, ſo that it is fully manifeſt that " the teſtimony of Jeſus is the ſpirit of Prophecy."

Q. Did the Prophecies define the time of the Meſſiah's advent and ſufferings?

A. They predicted that he ſhould come before the departure of the ſcepter from Judah [p], and that " a reconciliation for iniquity ſhould be made at his death, at the expiration of ſeventy weeks of years, or 490 years from the going forth of the commandment to reſtore Jeruſalem [q], and they declared that he ſhould appear under the ſecond temple [r], and before the deſtruction of the city and ſanctuary [s].

Q. Did the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament ſpeak alſo of the precurſor and followers of Chriſt, and of the nature, extenſion and influence of his kingdom?

[o] Pſalm xvi. 10, 11.
[p] Gen. xlix. 10.
[q] Dan. ix. 24. 27.
[r] Haggai ii. 7. 9.
[s] Dan. ix. 26.

A. They

A. They ſpoke of the meſſenger who ſhould precede his advent, and prepare his way [t]; of the coming of the Gentiles to his light, and kings to the brightneſs of his riſing [u]; of the ſmall beginning and great increaſe of his dominion, "cut" as it were like a "ſtone from the mountain without hands [x];" of the gifts of the Spirit, and of the bleſſed effects of Chriſtianity in converting the Gentiles and in reforming the world; and laſtly, of the antichriſtian power which ſhould ariſe and "do according to his will, and proſper till the indignation ſhould be accompliſhed, not regarding the God of his fathers, nor the deſire of women [y]."

Q. Were there any prophetic types under the old diſpenſation, which prefigured the circumſtances that prevailed under the Goſpel?

A. The whole Hebrew diſpenſation, with its ritual appointments and ceremo-

[t] Malachi iii. 1. iv. 5, 6.
[u] Iſaiah lx. 3.
[x] Dan. ii. 34.
[y] Dan. xi. 36, 37. ſee alſo vii. 8. 20—25.

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nial ſervices, is ſuppoſed to have had a figurative and typical intention, and to have borne a reference by a preconcerted analogy to the inſtitutions and regulations of the Goſpel.

Q. Did the characters and events of the Jewiſh hiſtory foreſhew in any reſpect the perſonages and tranſactions deſcribed in the narrations of the Evangeliſts?

A. They appear in many inſtances to have diſplayed a typical, and as it were emblematical caſt, which carried on the expectations of the more enlightened Hebrews to future ſcenes, and which afford to the retroſpect of Chriſtians wonderful marks of divine harmony and contrivance in the connection ſubſiſting between the two covenants.

Q. Can you illuſtrate the nature of the types of the Old Teſtament?

A. The Levitical ſervice, with its circumciſion, its ablutions and exterior ordinances, bore alluſion to the ſpiritual purification and ſanctity to be required by the Goſpel; the ſacrifices of the law prefigured the great atonement to be made by

by Chriſt. As to hiſtorical events, the enjoined offering up of Iſaac afforded a prophetic picture of the oblation of the ſon of God, "whoſe day Abraham beheld" in this ſcenical repreſentation, "and was glad." The paſſover, inſtituted as a memorial of the temporal deliverance of thoſe whom the deſtroyer paſſed over, when he beheld the blood of the paſchal lamb on the door poſts, and the ſcape goat, which on the day of expiation bare the tranſgreſſions of the people, repreſented the redemption effected, and the part ſuſtained on the croſs by our Saviour. So alſo the exodus from Egypt, the paſſage through the red ſea, and the entrance to Canaan, ſhadowed out the deliverance from the bondage of ſin, and the admiſſion by the waters of baptiſm to the inheritance of the promiſes. The ſign of the prophet Jonah, who was three days ſepulchered in the body of the fiſh, intimated the continuance of Chriſt for three days in the grave. Melchizedek; Moſes, Joſhua, David, and many others were repreſentatives of Chriſt, as was Elias of John the baptiſt;

baptiſt; Sarah and Hagar were allegorical figures of the old and new covenant, the manna and the rock were emblematical of Chriſt, and the lifting up of the brazen ſerpent in the wilderneſs, for the recovery of all whom the ſerpent had bitten, was ſymbolical of the ſalutary expoſure of our Saviour on the croſs.

Q. Are there any Prophecies in the Old Teſtament which appear to be verified in the preſent circumſtances of the world?

A. There are many; as particularly thoſe which relate to the multiplication of the ſeed of Abraham—to the wild independency of the deſcendants of Iſhmael, the Arabs of the deſert.—To the deſtruction of the Aſſyrian [z], the Babylonian [a], the Grecian [b], and the Roman Empires [c], under circumſtances of appropriate deſcription, and with denunciation of ſubſequent

[z] Nahum ii. 8. Zephaniah ii. 13. 15.

[a] Iſaiah xiii. 19—22. xiv. 22, 23. Jerem. l. 13. 23. 39, 40. li. 13. 26. 29. 37. 42. 43.

[b] Dan. vii. 6. viii. 5—8. 21, 22. xi. 3, 4.

[c] Dan. ii. 33. 35. vii. 7.

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particulars, verified in the actual ſtate of the countries in which they reſpectively flouriſhed.—To the deſolation of Judæa; and to the diſperſion of its inhabitants, become "a proverb and a by-word among all nations;" miraculouſly preſerved, while an "utter end" is made of their oppreſſors, and "their name blotted out" from under heaven[d].—To the fate of Egypt, ſtill "the baſeſt of kingdoms[e]," and of Tyre, changed to a place for the ſpreading of nets in the midſt of the ſea; not to mention many others which might be produced.

Q. How do we know that the Scriptures which contain theſe accounts may not have been altered to ſupport Chriſtianity?

A. They have always been in the vigilant cuſtody of the moſt determined enemies of Chriſtianity; their multiplied copies have been diſperſed with the ſcattered tribes of the Jews into all countries; the books were tranſlated into the Greek language, for the uſe of the Helleniſtical

[d] Levit. xxvi. 44. Deut. iv. 27. 30, 31. xxviii. 37. Ezek. xi. 16. xii. 15. Amos ix. 8.

[e] Ezek. xxix. 14, 15.

Jews in Egypt; the Pentateuch near three centuries before the birth of our Saviour, and all of them long before his appearance. They were alſo tranſlated into the Latin language, twice, before the expiration of the fourth century after Chriſt, and the various copies of the original, and of the Greek and Latin verſions agree in eſſential points; ſo as to confirm beyond a poſſibility of reaſonable diſpute, the authenticity and general integrity of the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, of which the Divine authority is acknowledged by Jews, Chriſtians, and Mahometans.

Q. What Prophecies are there in the New Teſtament, which demonſtrate the inſpiration of its books, and the truth of the Chriſtian Religion?

A. Thoſe eſpecially, which were uttered by our Lord with reſpect to his own ſufferings and death, and reſurrection, and aſcenſion to ſit on the right hand of the power of God: the conduct of his diſciples who were to betray, to deny, and to forſake him, or to ſuffer perſecution and martyrdom for his ſake.—To "glorify God

God by their death," as did St. Peter in the manner particularly deſcribed [f]; or to ſerve him by "tarrying," as did St. John, who ſurvived the deſtruction of Jeruſalem [g]. Thoſe farther, which predicted the ſubverſion of the city, after the remarkable calamities of the ſiege, and the entire demolition of the temple; to "be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled."—Thoſe which reſpected the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, the publication, and advancement of the Goſpel, its effects in exciting diſſenſion, yet promoting the welfare of mankind; the falſe Chriſts and hereſies which ſhould ariſe; with other particulars too numerous to detail.

Q. Were there any Prophecies ſpoken by the Apoſtles and firſt diſciples of our Lord, which appear to have received their completion?

A. Yes;—particularly thoſe of St. Paul which relate to the man of ſin, or myſtery of iniquity, which already worked in

[f] John xxi. 18. [g] John xxi. 20—23.

his time[h], and which are farther explicated by St. John, St. Peter, and St. Jude; with the deſcription of the Antichriſtian ſpirit, as ſuppoſed to be acompliſhed in the corruptions of the Papal power. The predictions which by the author of the book of Revelations were addreſſed to the ſeven churches of Aſia, have been fulfilled with remarkable exactneſs, as will appear on comparing the denunciations of the inſpired writer with the deſcriptions of travellers. The ſubſequent particulars alſo which are revealed in this book, and which relate probably to Mahomet[i], and poſſibly to the apoſtaſy of modern times, with other particulars which bear a reference to ſucceſſive periods of the Chriſtian Church, appear in many ſtriking inſtances to be realized; but as much difference of ſentiment prevails as to the application of the circumſtances deſcribed on the opening of the ſeals; and ſome obſcurity impends over Prophecies as yet but verified in part, we ſhall not

[h] 2 Theſſ. ii. 7, 8.

[i] Revel. ix. 10, 11.

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take into conſideration theſe myſterious teſtimonies, which will hereafter diſcloſe their evidence in ſupport of the truth of Chriſtianity.

Q. Are there not ſome Prophecies in the Scriptures, which have not received their accompliſhment?

A. Thoſe Prophecies are not yet accompliſhed, which relate to the entire converſion of the world, the reſtoration of the Jews, and the ſecond advent of Chriſt.

Q. Are there not ſome obſtacles from the changes which have happened ſince the promulgation of theſe Prophecies, and in the exiſting circumſtances of the world, which muſt impede the full and exact accompliſhment of theſe, or other Prophecies contained in the Scriptures?

A. Not any:—on the contrary, many circumſtances ſeem miraculouſly concerted to facilitate their final completion; as may particularly be obſerved with reſpect to thoſe which relate to the reſtoration of the Jews, and the farther advancement of Religion: as for inſtance, the wonderful

preſervation of that people, the diffuſion of knowledge, the improvement of intercourſe by commercial communication, and the removal of obſtructions to ſuch a degree, as even to have excited the expectation of their approaching accompliſhment.

Q. Did not the Pagan oracles profeſs inſpiration, and a foreknowledge of events?

A. The Pagan oracles are reported to have uttered numberleſs predictions, and the Sibylline books are repreſented to have contained prophetic revelations, but they were vague, equivocal, and ambiguous; they did not unfold, like the Scriptures, any regular or conſiſtent ſcheme, extending through many ages, and affecting the general welfare of mankind; but were delivered on occaſions of local and partial concern, were ſuggeſted by private and political motives, and fabricated by artful impoſtors, or evil ſpirits, to delude credulous and ſuperſtitious people. They had no adequate object, no certain character, no clear and determinate view; but like the precarious predictions hazarded by

by individuals in all ages, were little better than ſagacious conjectures, and received only a caſual completion.

Q. What proofs of the Divine authority of our Religion are drawn from the conſideration of *Miracles?*

A. Whatever manifeſtly exceeds the extent of human power, as meaſured by thoſe limits of its exertion which uniform experience has defined, and which overrules the eſtabliſhed laws of nature, muſt argue the agency of a divine controul.

Q. What demonſtration of divine power has been exhibited in ſupport of Chriſtianity?

A. Many eminent miracles were diſplayed in teſtimony of the claims both of the Hebrew and Chriſtian diſpenſations.

Q. What miracles atteſted the pretenſions of the Hebrew diſpenſation?

A. Thoſe tremendous miracles which were performed by Moſes, and which ſignalized the deliverance of the Iſraelites from their bondage under Pharaoh, the deſtruction of their purſuers, and the ſup-

port and direction of the people in the wilderneſs; the magnificent wonders which diſtinguiſhed the divine preſence, and the awful puniſhments of thoſe who rebelled or murmured againſt the Lord, and his ſervants; together with all thoſe manifeſtations of the interference and immediate goverment of God, which took place after the ſettlement of the Iſraelites in the land of Canaan; particularly in their remarkable victories and defeats, their preſervation in captivity and deliverances by appointed rulers and miniſters; the oracles imparted from the Schechinah, the works performed by the Prophets, and the preternatural abundance which preceded the ſabbatical year.

Q. What proof have we of the reality of theſe miracles.

A. The proof which reſults from reflection on the neceſſity of admitting that miracles muſt have operated, to effect the eſtabliſhment and preſervation of the people, in the circumſtances and polity under which we know that they did exiſt. The proof alſo which is derived from con-

conſideration of the indiſputable authority of the books in which the miracles are recorded, which could not have been received by the Jews, unleſs they had known the accounts to be true, particularly in thoſe parts which deſcribe the foundation of their government and the origin of their cuſtoms and obſervances; which books indeed form the baſis of their civil and religious conſtitution; and were acknowledged as the national annals, confirmed by perpetuated rites, inſtitutions and memorials [k], and atteſted by ſucceſſive Prophets and Hiſtorians through many generations.

Q. What miracles bore more immediate teſtimony to the truth and divine authority of the Goſpel diſpenſation?

A. The ſigns and wonders recorded in the writings of the Evangeliſts; the indications which announced the appearance of our Lord, as well by the miniſtry of angels, as by an eaſtern ſtar, a voice, and

[k] See Gen. xvii. 11. Joſh. v. 3. Levit. xxiii. 34. Ezra iii. 4. Joſhua iv. 20—24. Numb. xxi. 9. 2 Kings xviii. 4. Exod. xvi. 33, 34. Numb. xvii. 10.

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the deſcent of the Spirit from heaven; the whole ſeries of preternatural circumſtances which proclaimed his extraordinary character; from the light which ſhone around the ſhepherds of Bethlehem, to the earthquake which rent the rocks, and the darkneſs which overſpread the earth at his crucifixion; the mighty works of mercy which Chriſt himſelf performed in healing all manner of diſeaſes, in controlling the elements, in raiſing the dead, in conſtraining evil ſpirits; and laſtly, his own reſurrection, and viſible aſcenſion into heaven, and the open deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt on his diſciples.

Q. What miracles were performed by the Apoſtles?

A. Thoſe which proceeded from the gifts of the Spirit, and the promiſed aſſiſtance of our Lord; which were exhibited in the acquirement of languages—in the word of wiſdom—in the power of healing and reſtoring life—in the diſcerning of ſpirits—in the uttering of Prophecy, and in the authority over the powers of darkneſs.

Q. Is it not incompatible with the idea of

of a wiſe and perfect Providence to ſuppoſe the exiſtence of miracles; which ſeem to argue a departure from general and uniform principles of government?

A. It is not incompatible with the idea of a wiſe and perfect Providence, to ſuppoſe either the ſuſpenſion of general laws for a great and adequate purpoſe; or to believe that miracles may, by a preconcerted arrangement, conſtitute an allotted part of a general ſyſtem; when aſſigned as the ſuitable teſtimonies of a Divine Revelation, and furniſhed in ſupport of communications, worthy of a Divine interference.

Q. What proofs have we of the truth of the hiſtory recorded in the New Teſtament?

A. It is demonſtrated by the clear and credible reports of the Evangeliſts; by the concurrence of Heathen teſtimonies, which confirm many principal particulars; and by the eſtabliſhment of commemorative inſtitutions, originating in the event: as for inſtance, in the computation commencing with the birth of Chriſt, in the obſervance of the rite of baptiſm, in the reverence of the

the Chriſtian ſabbath, and in the participation of the Euchariſt.

Q. What evidence have we of the reality of the miracles?

A. The atteſtations of numerous, unanimous, and competent witneſſes, whoſe characters are free from the ſuſpicion of earthly motives, and exempt from the imputation of enthuſiaſm, whoſe integrity cannot be diſputed, and whoſe ſincerity is unimpeached—who could not be deceived in the reality of thoſe particulars of which they themſelves at firſt doubted, and to which they did not aſſent till after much heſitation, having ſeen "with their eyes, and looked upon and handled of the word of life;" being converted, by their final convictions after the reſurrection of Chriſt, from timid and wavering followers into determined and unſhaken diſciples—who related what was of public notoriety and expoſed to general examination, and the cavils of people aſſembled from all parts—who could have no poſſible motive to deceive others in the accounts which they publiſhed, with labour and peril, when oppoſed

poſed by every earthly obſtacle; and which they maintained with unvarying conſiſtency, and unſubdued fortitude, amidſt the ſufferings of perſecution, ignominy and death.

Q. Were there no other miracles diſplayed in ſupport of Chriſtianity?

A. The converſion of St. Paul from an inveterate perſecutor, "breathing out threatenings and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples of the Lord," to a zealous Apoſtle, was a ſignal inſtance of the Divine interference; and the rapid advancement, and diffuſive eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity, againſt the bigoted prejudices and paſſions, againſt the complicated intereſts, the civil and religious opinions of mankind, may be regarded as the effect of the immediate ſuperintendence and control of God; while the confirmation of its authority againſt the avowed hoſtility of its licentious adverſaries, and the ſecret conſpiracy of its inſidious enemies; notwithſtanding the corruptions interwoven with, and defacing its excellency, and in defiance of the powers of darkneſs which have never ceaſed to contend againſt it,

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may be conſidered as a permanent demonſtration of Divine countenance and ſupport; laſtly, the preſervation of its ſacred oracles, and the perpetuated ſucceſſion of its prieſthood exhibit the continued evidence of God's protection.

Q. Have not miracles been performed by magicians and other pretenders to ſupernatural power?

A. The wonders which the magicians of Egypt were permitted to diſplay in oppoſition to the miracles performed by Moſes, were perhaps allowed, with deſign to ſhew, that the ſervant of God did not act in concert with the ſpirits of darkneſs; and to demonſtrate, by a public trial, the inferiority of their enchantments to the authority delegated by the Almighty; whatever preternatural powers may have ſince been profeſſed, in ſupport of ſpurious pretenſions, and evil deſigns, muſt have been founded on deception, or have been maintained by the agency of apoſtate ſpirits.

Q. Have not miracles been effected by Heathens for beneficial purpoſes, and by the

the advocates for Revelations not contained in the Scripture.

A. Fictitious miracles have been, at different times, proclaimed, in imitation of thoſe manifeſted by Divine authority, as the appropriate teſtimonies of Revelation; ſuch as were thoſe which are reported by the Heathen hiſtorians, and thoſe which have been feigned in ſupport of the Mahometan and Romiſh ſuperſtitions; none of which will bear the teſt of examination, but were evidently fabricated by artful and deſigning men; diſproved by the very circumſtances with which they are involved, and often refuted by the end which they are found to have propoſed.

Q. What is the *Internal Evidence* which demonſtrates the truth of Chriſtianity?

A. That ſatisfactory and perſuaſive indication of its Divine origin, which developes itſelf in the excellency of the ſacred writings; in the coherence, and unity of deſign which pervades every part of Revelation, and in the harmony which reſults from the conſiſtency of the whole ſcheme.

Q. Wherein

Q. Wherein conſiſts particularly the excellency of the Scriptures?

A. In the ſublimity of their doctrines with reſpect to the attributes of the Supreme Being, whoſe perfections are uniformly diſcloſed with a majeſty that correſponds with the deſcription of an eternal, infallible, and omniſcient God, revealing himſelf to mankind as the creator, preſerver, and judge of the world; in the revelation of the myſtery of the ever bleſſed Trinity; in the detail of the principles of God's moral government, and of the economy of his merciful diſpenſations, which explains every difficulty, and gives an intereſt to every ſcene; in the communication of doctrines, which human reaſon could not have diſcovered, and the human mind could have no motive to contrive.

Q. In what other reſpect is the excellency of the Sacred Writings diſplayed?

A. In their relations as to the creation of the world, the origin of moral evil, the nature of man, the circumſtances of his fall, the promiſe of his reſtoration, and the ground of his hopes.—In the fidelity of their

their deſcriptions, verified by exiſting manners, and monuments which ſtill remain—in the admirable ſimplicity and beauty of their ſtyle—in the ſincerity of their confeſſions, as to particulars which reflected diſcredit on the characters concerned in the maintenance and propagation of Religion—in the delivery of precepts, reaſonable in themſelves, and adapted to the condition and exigencies of men—in the eſtabliſhment of an authoritative rule of conduct, founded on eternal ſanctions, and enforced on new motives of univerſal influence: not like the Heathen ſyſtems, debaſed by error, and mingled with falſe principles, but unexceptionable in all its parts; addreſſing the inward affections without flattery, regulating the firſt and ſecret ſprings of human action, and requiring a purity of heart in deference to the approbation of the inviſible God; conſpiring to the encouragement of every beneficial ſentiment, and every virtuous action: and co-operating on the ſureſt principles to the promotion of individual and ſocial happineſs: laſtly, in the illuſtration of its perfect law of righ-

teouſneſs, by the delineation of the glorious character of Chriſt, exhibited in ſublime and faultleſs pre-eminence, preaching univerſal charity, proclaiming exalted promiſes, and certifying a confidence in a reſurrection to eternal life, and a final and impartial judgment.

Q. Wherein conſiſts the coherence and unity of deſign which is repreſented to pervade every part of revelation?

A. In the intermixture and mutual dependency of the prophetical and hiſtorical accounts; in the concurrence of ſucceſſive writers to the developement of the ſcheme of Divine mercy, concerted for the redemption of mankind: in the uniform and regular advancement of a ſyſtematic plan of Prophecy, which gradually unfolds its ſcenes, and exhibits, through many generations, the contrivance and wiſdom of an heavenly council; in the detail of the origin and progreſs of a ſyſtem in which particular intereſts are rendered ſubſervient to general benefit; and individuals, families, tribes, and multiplied people, employed in ſubſervieney to

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the introduction of a diſpenſation, which is finally to embrace all the nations of the world.

Q. Wherein is ſhewn the harmony of the Scriptures?

A. In the admirable agreement which prevails between the Old and New Teſtament; in the congenial ſpirit of piety which animates every ſentence; in the conformity of deſign which connects the whole race of mankind in the participation of an univerſal bleſſing; in the correſpondence between prophecies and events, the types and the things typified; and laſtly, in the conſiſtency of accounts, in which minute variations conſpire only to prove, that no agreement was concerted by human contrivance, but that harmony is the reſult of truth.

Q. Are there any other proofs which demonſtrate the truth of Chriſtianity?

A. The proofs of Chriſtianity, like the excellencies in the natural world, brighten and multiply in proportion as its evidence is contemplated. The ſeal of Divine truth is impreſſed on every part, its outlines and

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prominent features are diſcernible by the tranſient view, but its retired perfections muſt be attentively examined and ſcrutinized by the exerciſe of our intellectual powers; and hence it is that the beſt informed and moſt learned men have been always moſt ſtrongly impreſſed with the conviction of its claims to faith.

Many other arguments might be produced in ſupport of its Divine origin; but what has been urged is ſufficient: and it muſt upon reflection be clear, that God could not ſuffer his creatures to be totally ignorant of his will, or permit them to be deceived by a weight of evidence ſo great, as that which has been furniſhed in ſupport of Chriſtianity.

THE END.

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